

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3749

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KATHMANDU 5459

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IN, NP

SUBJECT: PRESS POLEMICS MAR NEW ATMOSPHERE IN INDO-NEPALI
RELATIONS

1. A SHORT EXCHANGE OF PRESS POLEMICS HAS THREATENED TO MAR THE
HONEYMOON ATMOSPHERE IN BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND
NEPAL WHICH PRIME MINISTER TULSI GIRI HAS TRIED TO FOSTER.

WRITING IN THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THE WELL KNOWN INDIAN JOURNALIST
KULDIP NAYAR RESPONDED TO PRIME MINISTER GIRI'S RECENT PRESS
CONFERENCE (KATHMANDU 5223) WITH CONSIDERABLE
SKEPTICISM AND PROCEEDED TO REITERATE AN
EXTENSIVE LIST OF GOI GRIEVANCES AGAINST NEPAL. QUICKLY TAKING
UP THE CUDGELS, MANARANJAN JOSSE OF RISING NEPAL RESPONDED IN A
LONG ARTICLE IN WHICH HE TOOK NAYAR TO TASK, AS WELL AS "THOSE
SEGMENTS OF THE INDIAN PRESS WHICH CONTINUE TO PRINT
FALSEHOODS" AGAINST NEPAL. ALTHOUGH THE AFFAIR SEEMS NOW TO
HAVE DIED DOWN, IT CAME AT AN UNFORTUNATE TIME WHEN THE GIRI
GOVERNMENT HAD OFFERED AN OLIVE BRANCH TO NEW DELHI, NOT ONLY IN
THE FORM OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS STATEMENTS, BUT ALSO BY
MAKING CONCESSIONS ON SEVERAL KEY ECONOMIC QUESTIONS.

2. COMMENT: ACCORDING TO A HIGHLY PLACED INDIAN DIPLOMAT HERE, THE
NAYAR PIECE WAS THE DIRECT RESULT OF A BRIEFING BY N.N. JHA,
FORMER INDIAN DCM IN KATHMANDU AND CURRENTLY MFA JOINT SECRETARY
FOR THE NORTHERN DIVISION. JHA IS CONSIDERED TO BE "ANTI
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NEPALESE" AND FAR FROM OBJECTIVE REGARDING HMG INTENTIONS

TOWARDS INDIA. ACCORDING TO THE SAME SOURCE, AMBASSADOR RASGOTRA SENT A SHARP MESSAGE TO THE MFA FOLLOWING THE NAYAR STORY IN WHICH HE POINTED OUT THAT SUCH STORIES WERE HARDLY HELPFUL TO HIS MISSION IN KATHMANDU. HOPEFULLY THE ISSUE WILL NOW BE ALLOWED TO SUBSIDE AND POLEMICS BY BOTH GOVERNMENTS WILL CEASE.

CARGO

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